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INFO RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL PRIORITY
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 0230
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0141
RUEHBD/AMEMBASSY BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN PRIORITY 0908
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0179
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0187
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 1775
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 0392
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 4184
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY 1730
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY 0286
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 8121
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY 0113
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 0246
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 0444
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 1980
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0319
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY 6756
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 0609
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0624
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 0206
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0922
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0277
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 005330

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA DONICK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/12/2016

TAGS: PREL PTER ECON IS LE JA

SUBJECT: JAPAN ON MAINTAINING THE MOMENTUM ON LEBANON

REF: STATE 148157

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b),(d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Japan agrees that momentum must be maintained promoting peace in Lebanon and fully supports the implementation of UNSCR 1701. Tokyo is hesitant to contribute additional funds, however, citing Lebanon's wealth and the fact that assistance pledges at the Stockholm Conference yielded nearly twice what was requested. In addition, while Japan agrees pressure must be exerted on Iran and Syria to stop their unhelpful activities, Tokyo believes these countries must be engaged, rather than isolated. MOFA holds that the territorial dispute over the Sheba Farms must be resolved in Lebanon's favor and that Israeli troops must then withdraw from that area in order to deny Hezbollah the stated reason for its existence. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Embassy Tokyo Political Officer September 13 delivered the talking points contained in reftel to Hideo Sato, Director of MOFA's First Middle East Division of the Middle East and African Affairs Bureau. PolOff noted we are grateful for the \$7 million Japan has pledged, particularly the \$2 million earmarked for the clearance of unexploded ordnance. Sato replied that Japan agrees with the need to maintain the momentum in Lebanon and fully supports the implementation of UNSCR 1701. However, Japan is not sympathetic to Lebanon's calls for additional funding. Lebanon is a relatively wealthy country, with hundreds of thousands of expats who are also in a position to help, explained Sato. In fact, Lebanon's per capita GNP makes it ineligible to obtain Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Japan. In addition, pledges of assistance at the

Stockholm Conference nearly doubled the amounts sought by the Lebanese. Finally, Sato said, Lebanon bears some of the responsibility for the damage that took place because for years it has made no move to disarm Hezbollah or other armed groups as required by previous UNSCRs.

¶3. (C) PolOff emphasized that more is at stake than simply the economic reconstruction of southern Lebanon. Also at stake is the political imperative of enabling the Lebanese government to exercise sovereignty over its own territory without interference from outside powers. This, in turn, will lead to greater political stability throughout the region. Sato agreed that pressure on Syria and Iran, both countries that have "normal" relations with Japan, is required. But he said that Tokyo believes the best way to engage both countries on this issue is through dialogue rather than isolation. He pointed out that despite the fact Japan maintains diplomatic relations with Syria, it makes it a point not to send or receive high-level visitors or to contribute significant ODA funds.

¶4. (C) The key to solving the underlying problem of Hezbollah in southern Lebanon involves a three step process, according to Sato. First, the Sheba Farms dispute must be put to rest. Pressure must be brought on both Lebanon and Syria to solve this by agreeing that the disputed land belongs to Lebanon. Second, the Israelis must then be pressured to evacuate that area, pursuant to UNSCR 425 which calls for their withdrawal from Lebanon. Once the Israelis have departed, Hezbollah's stated reason for existing - to fight against the Israeli occupation of Lebanon - will be removed. He admitted that many obstacles lie in the path of accomplishing this goal, and that Hezbollah is unlikely to simply fade away. He also expressed doubts that the Lebanese government possesses the political will or strength to really confront and disarm Hezbollah, although he said he is hopeful that the combined force of 30,000 soldiers from the Lebanese Armed Forces and the international community might serve to deter Hezbollah and bring stability to the south.

¶5. (C) The morning following PolOff's meeting with Sato, the Kyodo press service quoted unnamed government officials as saying Japan, led by elements at MOFA, was considering making Ground Self Defense Forces and/or Maritime Self Defense Forces available to UNIFIL in support roles. When queried about this report, Sato acknowledged that internal discussions are being held, but since nothing has been decided, the press reports are "incorrect."

¶6. (C) COMMENT: Japan will continue to provide vocal support for UNSCR 1701, but is unlikely to contribute any additional material assistance above and beyond the \$7 million already pledged unless pressed to do so at higher levels. As for sending troops, no decision will be made at least until a new government takes office later this month. We judge the prospect of Japan sending troops to Lebanon as remote, given the unsettled situation there and Tokyo's risk aversion, Iraq and the small GSDF contingent in the Golan Heights notwithstanding. END COMMENT.

SCHIEFFER